

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 08138 01 OF 02 281511Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W  
-----067437 281514Z /72

Z O 281405Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO WHITE HOUSE FLASH  
SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 3865  
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 8138

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F) IS US  
SUBJ: VP VISIT TO WESTERN WALL

REF.: STATE 160089

1. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND I DISCUSSED PROBLEM OF  
WESTERN WALL VISIT THIS MORNING, JUNE 28, FOR ALMOST  
THREE-QUARTERS OF AN HOUR. HE INTRODUCED SUBJECT ALMOST  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY ARRIVAL, IN MOOD OF GREAT SERIOUSNESS  
AND GENUINE DISTRESS. AFTER HEARING OUT HIS ARGUMENTS,  
WHICH I WILL RECAPITULATE BELOW, I WENT OVER U.S. GOVERN-  
MENT POSITION IN GREAT DETAIL.  
I REVIEWED THE PRECEDENTS FOR OTHER  
HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS, STRESSING FACT THAT FOR ELEVEN YEARS  
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD ACQUIESCED, ALBEIT UNHAPPILY, IN  
OUR POSITION THAT WE COULD GIVE NO RPT NO SYMBOLIC  
RECOGNITION TO ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF EAST JERUSALEM BY  
HAVING CABINET-LEVEL OR HIGHER OFFICIALS VISIT THAT  
SECTION OF THE CITY ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR GOI  
OFFICIALS. I STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD NOT  
RPT NOT GONE TO EAST JERUSALEM AT ALL, THAT SECRETARY  
BLUMENTHAL HAD CANCELLED HIS VISIT WHEN ISSUE WAS RAISED,  
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AND THAT SECRETARY VANCE'S IMPROMPTU VISIT WAS IN COMPANY  
ONLY OF SECURITY PERSONNEL, CONSUL GENERAL NEWLIN, AND  
MYSELF, AND WAS SPECIFICALLY STATED TO BE OF A PURELY  
PRIVATE NATURE. I REMINDED HIM THAT WE HAD ACCEPTED  
JERUSALEM ON DE FACTO BASIS AS ISRAELI CAPITAL AND  
REGULARLY DID BUSINESS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS IN WESTERN  
PART OF CITY. I STRESSED DELICATE MOMENT IN PEACE PROCESS,

AND REPEATEDLY GAVE OUR JUDGMENT THAT TO DO ANYTHING SYMBOLICALLY DIFFERENT IN REGARD TO EAST JERUSALEM AT THE MOMENT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE VERY SERIOUS EFFECTS IN ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH COULD UNDERMINE OUR OVERRIDINGLY IMPORTANT EFFORT TO GET DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS UNDER WAY AGAIN. SAID THAT I PERSONALLY REGRETTED VERY MUCH MAYOR KOLLEK'S OBVIOUS DECISION TO DRAMATIZE THIS ISSUE AND TO RISK TARNISHING FAVORABLE IMPACT OF VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL IN PROCESS. NOT VERY DELICATELY I SUGGESTED THAT I WAS CERTAIN THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF OR OTHERS COULD HELP TO PERSUADE THE MAYOR TO BACK OFF IN VIEW OF THE INEVITABLE NEGATIVE EFFECT ON ISRAEL'S IMAGE AND INTERESTS IN THE UNITED STATES, BOTH WITH REGARD TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND TO THE CONGRESS/PUBLIC OPINION, IF THIS MATTER CONTINUED TO ASSUME INCREASING PUBLIC IMPORTANCE. I URGED THE PM TO PUT THE QUESTION IN PERSPECTIVE IN VIEW OF OTHER DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL AT THIS STAGE, AND IN VIEW OF THE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE THE PEACE PROCESS ASSUMES FOR BOTH OF US. I TRIED TO REBUT HIS INEVITABLE ARGUMENT THAT SADAT HAD VISITED EAST JERUSALEM IN MAYOR KOLLEK'S COMPANY WITH OTHER GOI OFFICIALS, BY STRESSING THE FACT THAT SADAT HAD HIS OWN POSITION AND HIS OWN RATIONALE FOR DOING SO WHICH WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO US. I CAME BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN TO THE IMPORTANCE OF RETAINING OUR IMAGE AS AN EVEN-HANDED THIRD

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PARTY IN THE PEACE PROCESS, AND THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO THAT IN THE ARAB WORLD IF WE WERE SEEN TO BE CHANGING OUR POLICY TOWARD JERUSALEM IN THIS SYMBOLIC FASHION.

2. BEGIN WAS POLITE AND SYMPATHETIC TO ALL MY ARGUMENTS BUT SHOWED NO RPT NO SIGNS OF GIVE. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOW IN HIS OPINION TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID CASTING A SERIOUS PALL OVER THE VP'S VISIT IF HE DID NOT VISIT AT LEAST THE WESTERN WALL IN THE COMPANY OF MAYOR KOLLEK. HE POINTED OUT THAT KOLLEK AND THE CITY COUNCIL ARE LOCAL AUTHORITIES RATHER THAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND THAT THEY ARE ELECTED WITH THE VOTES OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE ARAB INHABITANTS OF EAST JERUSALEM, THOSE WHO HAVE ELECTED TO TAKE ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP. (CONSUL GENERAL NEWLIN CONFIRMS THIS FACT, WHILE POINTING OUT THE MAJORITY OF THE EAST JERUSALEM ARABS DO NOT VOTE BY CHOICE AND RETAIN THEIR JORDANIAN CITIZENSHIP.) BEGIN REMINDED ME THAT WHAT HAD STARTED OUT AS A RESPONSE TO DULZZIN'S INVITATION ON BEHALF OF THE ISRAEL-AMERICA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WAS NOW BEING TREATED AS A STATE VISIT WITH HIMSELF AND SPEAKER OF THE KNESSET SHAMIR AS THE

OFFICIAL HOSTS. JERUSALEM WAS THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL  
AND NO PHYSICAL DIVISION IN THE CITY COULD EVER BY  
TOLERATED AGAIN. THE PURPOSE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S  
TRIP IS TO STRENGTHEN AND UNDERSCORE THE SPECIAL BONDS  
OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES AND TO HELP CELEBRATE  
ISRAEL'S THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES,

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-----071447 281815Z /72/72  
Z O 281405Z JUN 78 ZFF6  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO WHITE HOUSE FLASH  
SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 3866  
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 8138

EXDIS  
C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR ADDRESSEE (WHITE HOUSE ADDED)

HE SAID, IF THE VICE PRESIDENT DOES NOT AT LEAST ALLOW  
THE MAYOR OF ISRAEL'S CAPITAL TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE  
HOLY SHRINE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, THE WESTERN WALL, THERE  
IS NO WAY THAT THE ISSUE CAN BE MINIMIZED FOR THE  
ISRAELI PUBLIC. AS I KNEW, HE SAID, THE PRESS IS ALREADY  
MAKING A GREAT ISSUE OF THIS POTENTIAL "SLIGHT" TO THE  
STATE OF ISRAEL, AND THE ISSUE WOULD CONTINUE TO BOIL  
FOR WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME IF THE VICE PRESIDENT WERE  
NOT PERMITTED TO VISIT THE WESTERN WALL AS A RESULT OF  
OUR UNYIELDING POLICY POSITION. HE SAID THAT "ALL OF  
US AND ALL OF OUR PEOPLE WANT TO RECEIVE OUR GREAT FRIEND,  
VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, WITH OPEN ARMS AND MAKE HIS VISIT  
A TOTAL AND OVERWHELMING SUCCESS." BUT, HE DID NOT SEE  
ANY WAY TO AVOID TANISHING IT SIGNIFICANTLY IF WE STUCK  
TO OUR GUNS. HE INSISTED THAT NO ONE COULD PERSUADE  
KOLLEK TO CHANGE HIS VIEW, CERTAINLY NOT NOW, AND THAT  
IN ANY CASE THE ISSUE WAS UNAVOIDABLE IN THE CONTEXT OF  
A VISIT OF THIS SORT. HE STRESSED THE INCONGRUITY  
OF HELPING ISRAEL CELEBRATE ITS THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
WHILE REFUSING TO VISIT THE WESTERN WALL.

3. BEGIN WENT OVER THESE POINTS A NUMBER OF TIMES WITH  
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GREAT EMOTION AND I BELIEVE SINCERITY. AT ONE POINT HE  
THE NATURE OF THE VENT WOULD REALLY ARGUE FOR HIS  
ACCOMPANYING THE VICE PRESIDENT, BUT THAT HE UNDERSTOOD  
THE STRENGTH OF OUR ARGUMENTS AND THAT HE WOULD NOT  
SUGGEST ANY SUCH THING. NOR WOULD THE GOVERNMENT  
INSIST ON HAVING ANYONE OTHER THAN KOLLEK AND PERHAPS  
ONE OR TWO MEMBERS OF THE JERUSALEM CITY COUNCIL  
ACCOMPANY THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY. BUT AS THE  
ONLY APPROPRIATE MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVE, HE WAS  
CONVINCED THAT KOLLEK COULD ACCOMPANY WITHOUT PRODUCING  
THE DIRE DIPLOMATIC EFFECTS ON THE PEACE PROCESS WHICH  
I HAD PREDICTED. HE SAID HE JUST COULD NOT SEE THAT  
THIS WOULD REPRESENT THE SORT OF "MAJOR SHIFT SHIFT IN U.S.  
POLICY" WHICH I HAD DESCRIBED.

4. HE CONCLUDED THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION BY  
PLEADING WITH ME TO ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE  
SECRETARY TO RECONSIDER OUR POSITION AND PERMIT  
MAYOR KOLLEK TO PLAY THE APPROPRIATE ROLE IN THIS HAPPY  
EVENT BY ACCOMPANYING THE VICE PRESIDENT TO THE WALL.  
(IF THIS OCCURS, HE SAID THAT THE MAYOR WOULD ALSO  
WANT TO WELCOME THE VICE PRESIDENT AT THE ENTRANCE TO  
WEST JERUSALEM WITH THE TRADITIONAL "BREAD AND SALT.")  
BY IMPLICATION, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT KOLLEK WOULD BOYCOTT  
ALL ASPECTS OF THE VISIT IF HE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE  
WESTERN WALL VISIT.)

5. WE ARE SQUARELY ON THE HORNS OF AN IMPOSSIBLE  
DILEMMA. I HAVE SUSPECTED STRONGLY EVER SINCE SADAT  
BROKE THE TRADITION BY VISITING EAST JERUSALEM HIMSELF  
THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO FACE THIS ISSUE MORE SQUARELY  
IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND THE NEAR FUTURE IS NOW UPON  
US. FRANKLY, I DO NOT THINK WE WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE  
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ANY HIGH LEVEL VISITS TO JERUSALEM IN THE FUTURE WITHOUT  
A SIMILAR UPROAR, SINCE IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE DE  
FACTOR ACQUIESCENCE WE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN DURING PREVIOUS  
ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS WILL NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE. ON THE  
OTHER HAND, I BELIEVE WE CAN HOLD THE LINE INDEFINITELY  
AT THE LEVEL OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, AS DISTINCT FROM  
CABINET-LEVEL GOI OFFICIALS, IF WE ALLOW JERUSALEM'S  
MAYOR TO GO ALONG ON HIGH LEVEL VISITS IN ANY PART OF

HIS CITY IN THE FUTURE. IF WE WERE TO MAKE THIS POLICY STICK, I THINK WE COULD CREDIBLY ARGUE THAT WE ARE NOT IN ANY WAY ENDORSING FORMAL ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF EAST JERUSALEM, BUT RATHER MERELY ACCEPTING THE FACTUAL SITUATION THAT ISRAEL OCCUPIES EAST JERUSALEM UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THAT THE MAYOR OF THE UNIFIED CITY HAS LEGITIMATE RESPONSIBILITIES DE FACTO IN EAST JERUSALEM AS WELL AS IN WEST JERUSALEM.

6. ONE THING IS CLEAR, HOWEVER UNFORTUNATE IT IS TO REACH THE CONCLUSION: THE WESTERN WALL UPROAR WILL SIGNIFICANTLY DETRACT FROM THE OVERALL POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TRIP IF WE STICK TO OUR GUNS. MOREOVER, WE WILL HAVE TO FACE THE SAME ISSUE ON FUTURE VISITS HERE. I DOUBT THERE WILL BE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN ADJUSTMENT IN OUR PAST PRACTICE THAN THIS ONE. THERE I RECOMMEND THAT WE ACQUIESCE IN KOLLEK'S ROLE HOLDING TOTALLY FIRM AGAINST ANY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BEING INVOLVED ON THIS VISIT OR ANY FUTURE ONES.  
LEWIS

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**To:** WHITE HOUSE STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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